

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7148

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SOPN, GW

SUBJECT: PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE MILITARY SHIP-
MENTS TO ISRAEL FROM U.S. STOCKPILES IN THE FRG

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT THE FRG'S POSITION WOULD BE IF THE U.S. ONCE AGAIN ATTEMPTED TO RESUPPLY ISRAEL FROM U.S. STOCKPILES IN GERMANY DURING A RENEWED OUTBREAK OF ARAB-ISRAELI FIGHTING IS A HIGHLY TOPICAL ONE WITH GERMAN NEWS MEDIA. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE CHANCELLOR WAS CORRECT WHEN HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE PUBLICLY ON WHAT THE FRG'S POSITION WOULD BE IN THE EVENT OF RENEWED MIDEASTERN HOSTILITIES. YET THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ASSUMPTION THAT THE FRG WOULD NOT PREVENT THE U.S. FROM SENDING SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL FROM ITS STOCKPILES IN THE FRG IF IT DECIDED TO DO SO. AT THE SAME TIME THE PRESS CLEARLY HOPES THAT THE U.S. HAS MADE CONTINGENCY PLANNING WHICH WILL NOT REQUIRE DRAWDOWNS ON ITS STOCKPILES IN GERMANY OR THAT SUCH DRAWDOWNS CAN BE DONE DISCREETLY ENOUGH NOT TO PROVOKE ARAB RETALIATION AGAINST THE FRG. END SUMMARY

1. ON JANUARY 7 THE QUESTION OF RESUPPLYING ISRAEL WAS POSED TO DEPUTY FEDERAL PRESS SPOKESMAN GRUNEWALD. HE REFERRED TO AN INTERVIEW WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT PUBLISHED IN DER SPIEGEL ISSUE OF JANUARY 6 AND REFUSED TO GO FURTHER. DER SPIEGEL HAD ASKED THE CHANCELLOR "ACTUALLY HOW STRONG IS THE PRESSURE OF THE AMERICANS ON THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC TO MAKE AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS AVAILABLE FOR THE SUPPLYING OF ISRAEL IN CASE OF WAR?" SCHMIDT REPLIED, "I KNOW OF NO PRESSURE. WE WOULD IN ANY EVENT NOT YIELD TO IT. SINCE I DON'T FEEL MYSELF TO BE THE CHANCELLOR OF A WORLD POWER, I WILL NOT PUBLICLY PHILOSOPHIZE OVER YOUR QUESTION. THAT WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS."

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2. THIS INTERVIEW HAD ALREADY BEEN WIDELY NOTED IN OTHER MEDIA. THE MILITARY CORRESPONDENT OF THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, RUEDIGER MONIAC, WRITING IN THE JANUARY 6 FAZ ON THE INTERVIEW REPORTED: "COMMON RULES HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT WHICH OBVIOUSLY PROVIDE THAT BONN WOULD TOLERATE THE USE OF AMERICAN BASES AND AMERICAN ARMS IN THE FRG FOR RESUPPLYING ISRAEL, IF WASHINGTON

WERE TO TAKE SUCH ACTION WITHOUT ATTRACTING PUBLIC ATTENTION. THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO THE SHIPPING OF AMERICAN ARMS FROM THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC ON SHIPS SAILING UNDER THE AMERICAN FLAG TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION, NOR WOULD INTENSIFIED USE OF U.S. AIRBASES IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC BE CONSPICUOUS. IN BONN'S VIEW, SUCH UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE PARTNER DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE BALANCED POLICY BONN INTENDS TO PURSUE VIS-A-VIS ALL MIDEAST COUNTRIES." MONIAC HAS CLOSE TIES IN THE FMOD AND HIS COMMENT PRESUMABLY REFLECTS HIGH-LEVEL THINKING IN THAT MINISTRY.

3. COMMENTING ON THE SAME PROBLEM, GEORG SCHROEDER, BONN CORRESPONDENT EMERITUS OF DIE WELT, TOOK A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK ON JANUARY 7. "WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS MORE THAN A GAME OF POKER. MINEFIELDS ARE BEING LAID, AND BOTH LITERALLY AND SYMBOLICALLY THEY MEAN THAT LIVES ARE AT STAKE. THAT IS WHAT OUR CHANCELLOR MEANT, WHEN SCHMIDT SAID IT WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS FOR HIM TO SPEAK PUBLICLY ABOUT WHETHER IN

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AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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CASE OF WAR BONN WOULD MAKE AVAILABLE AIRFIELDS AND
HARBORS FOR A SUPPLY LINE TO ISRAEL....TO CONSIDER THE
TWO WORST POSSIBILITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: (1) EITHER
A REGIONALLY LIMITED CONFLICT COULD BREAK OUT OR (2) SUCH
A WAR WOULD BROADEN AND THE AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS WOULD
GET INTO IT WITH THEIR WEAPONS...THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT
THAT, THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION HAVING BEING RECOGNIZED
AS NATO BUSINESS IN NATO'S OWN COMMUNIQUE IN DECEMBER,
A NATO EMERGENCY IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD AS A MATTER
OF COURSE INVOLVE USE OF FRG BASES BY THE U.S....
WHAT WOULD BE THE SITUATION DURING A REGIONAL CONFLICT?
IT IS DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET THE TACITURN CHANCELLOR
OTHER THAN THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL GIVE AN
ANSWER ONLY IN A CONCRETE INDIVIDUAL CASE AND ONLY AFTER
HAVING EXAMINED ALL OF ITS FOREIGN POLITICAL AND
MILITARY ASPECTS."

4. THE BONNER RUNDSCHAU OF JANUARY 7 LIKewise QUOTED
THE CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS IN DER SPIEGEL AND DEPUTY
FEDERAL PRESS SPOKESMAN GRUNEWALD REFERENCE TO IT. IT
THEN WENT ON TO STATE: "BONN FOREIGN OFFICE QUARTERS

CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT BONN HAD BEEN APPROACHED IN THIS MATTER BY ANY SIDE." ACCORDING TO SAME NEWSPAPER, "WHEN SCHLESINGER AND LEBER SETTLED DIFFICULTIES RESULTING FROM BONN'S ATTITUDE DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, THEY AGREED ON A PROCEDURE OF CONSULTATION WHICH HAS PROVED EFFECTIVE. THEY DISCUSSED POSSIBILITIES FOR ENABLING THE U.S. UNRESTRICTEDLY TO DISPOSE OF ARMS AND EQUIPMENT IN U.S. DEPOTS IN THE FRG WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE ARMS THAT WOULD BE UNDER NATO CONTROL IN AN EMERGENCY. SUCH ARMS COULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE FRG ONLY WITH NATO APPROVAL. IN THE FRG THE U.S. MAINTAINS INSTALLATIONS--SUCH AS THE RAMSTEIN AIR FORCE BASE--THAT SERVE BOTH NATO AND U.S. NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD WANT TO USE BASES IN THE FRG FOR RESUPPLYING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISRAEL IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER MIDEAST WAR. THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN BONN SAID RECENTLY SUCH ACTION WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE FRG."

5. THE LAST SENTENCE IN THE BONNER RUNDSCHAU ARTICLE IS A REFERENCE TO AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, THEN IN CAIRO, TO THE LIBYAN WEEKLY AL SAYAD IN LATE DECEMBER. AT THAT TIME HE WARNED THAT THE ARABS WOULD REGARD GRANTING THE U.S. FREE USE OF ITS BASES IN THE FRG FOR THE RESUPPLY OF ISRAEL IN A MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AS A BREACH OF WEST GERMAN NEUTRALITY. THESE BASES ARE TO BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR NATO PURPOSES, THE AMBASSADOR WAS QUOTED AS SAYING.
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